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## THE RIVALRY OF GERMANY AND ENGLAND

The commercial supremacy and imperial dominion of Great Britain were made possible by tremendous contests with her rivals on the Continent. In the sixteenth century a hazardous struggle freed her at last from Spain. After a long series of wars she shattered the power of France. In the nineteenth century she was able to check the glacier-like advance of Russia. But at the beginning of the twentieth she was face to face with a danger as pressing and terrible as any which had threatened her before.

The relations of England and Germany attracted little attention until the nineteenth century had come to an end. In the main they were peaceful, inconspicuous, and commonplace. Between Germans and Englishmen existed traditional friendship, with no memory of wars once fought or rivalry maintained. Both were conscious of a certain kinship arising from blood, religion, and speech. Together the two nations had struggled against common enemies. By the aid of England, Frederick the Great had made firm the foundations of Prussia. Side by side the two peoples had liberated Europe from Napoleon. France was their enemy nearest and most dreaded; against France each had an inheritance of fear and a present filled with doubt.

While Germany remained weak and distracted there could, of course, be no serious rivalry, but the establishment of a German Empire seemed at first to bring about no change. The Germans dreaded the revenge of France; England feared the

alliance of France and Russia. While Germany was occupied with the task of upholding the new Empire and in perfecting modern industrial organization, England was striving to preserve naval superiority over the French and Russians. Against these two alone was her two-power standard maintained. Neither on land nor on sea was Germany regarded as a probable enemy. Such was the situation down to about 1900.

Within ten years of this time conditions were entirely changed. Seldom has there been a revolution more rapid and profound. In a single decade England, France, and Russia had put aside their age-long hostility and drawn together in friendliest understanding. In Morocco, in Persia, in the farther corners of the world, the consequences of this change were already manifest. On the other hand the hostility of Germany and England had become threatening and fierce. Against England fleets of German battleships were being built, while from far and near England had drawn in her navies to the Channel and the North Sea to keep perpetual guard against Germany. The centre of politics and world-strife now was somewhere between London and Berlin. Portents were not wanting that the Furies were urging on war for the hegemony of Europe.

And yet, sudden as was this revolution and dire as were its possibilities, when men reviewed the past, they could see clearly how the change had come about. For more than a generation England and Germany had been drawing apart, not because of chance, or dynasty, or personal whim, but because their interests were antagonistic. What with trade rivalry and economic competition they were jostling each other in the market-places of the world, and meeting with jealousy and dislike in the few districts which remained to be apportioned; the one was striving to retain what she had acquired; the other was winning and encroaching and plotting. In diplomacy, in colonial policy, in commerce, in industry, and in finance, in all those things which go to make up power and greatness, Germany and England were seen in rivalry continuous and aggressive. Here were all the elements of an irrepressible conflict.

This hostility rested fundamentally upon the rise of a commercial and industrial Germany having colonial ambitions. It

became critical with the startling development of the German navy.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century England possessed unquestioned preëminence in the world of industry and commerce. As time went on, the United States of America loomed up like a giant in the West, but they were far away and absorbed in themselves. In Europe France was the chief rival, but France had been outdistanced, and now in all respects England was sovereign. Her vessels sailed on every sea. The wares of her cities were sold in every mart of the East and the West. From the profits of her trade and manufacture she waxed strong and mighty and rich. Her population increased wondrously. In all directions English men and women went out to found new Englands, to take possession of decrepit empires and guide the destinies of nations. Such rivalry as England encountered, she overrode. By the sea she was protected; on the sea she found her wealth; on the sea she was supreme.

Then slowly and painfully she became aware of a real opponent and a dangerous enemy. During the last generation of the nineteenth century the German Empire entered upon the course which England had begun earlier. The establishment of the North German Confederation in 1866 was followed by tremendous industrial expansion, but this was soon overshadowed by the mighty outburst after the founding of the Empire in 1871. Cities which had been sleeping since the Thirty Years War became vast emporiums in a single lifetime. All up and down the Rhine there was the smoke and the noise and the hum which the Englishmen had known in the Midlands. Farther east in Prussia and in Saxony huge factories and chimneys dotted the landscape as in Lancashire. Berlin grew faster than any other city in Europe. Whole industries were revolutionized and then gathered to Germany. A teeming population furnished the labor; technical schools and universities gave the skill and the secrets of trade. From far down the scale Germany rose to be the second industrial power in Europe.

The results were soon seen. All over the world goods were sold at lower rates than Englishmen could sell them, and presently a successful invasion was made of the English markets

themselves. It was in vain that Parliament attempted to stigmatize these goods by causing them to be labeled — "Made in Germany;" they were found not merely cheaper but better. The Germans were using greater care and technical skill with less expensive labor, and gradually the commercial predominance of England was shaken. As the pinch of competition was felt, increasing bitterness resulted.

Along with this industrial progress the Germans made gigantic strides in commercial development. In 1860 their foreign trade amounted to two and a half billion marks; in 1900 it had quadrupled. A vast fleet of ships was created. In 1870 the entire German shipping amounted to less than one million tons; in 1900 it was double that much. In 1901 there were of steam vessels alone a million and a half tons. At that time the Germans were building in their own shipyards a hundred thousand tons a year. Much of this wonderful activity was owing to the government, which gave encouragement by subsidy, by state assistance, and by supervision. The results in a single generation were incredible. The Hamburg-American and the North German Lloyd steamship companies ranked among the strongest maritime organizations in the world; Hamburg became the greatest seaport upon the Continent; Germany became the second commercial nation of Europe.

A startling increase in the population, one of the most curious phenomena of recent times, was both the cause and the effect of this industrial expansion. Side by side with a stationary population in France and rapidly increasing numbers in England, the population of Germany increased by leaps and bounds. No other circumstance has so completely altered the balance of power in contemporary Europe. In 1801 the population of France was 27,000,000; by 1910 it had increased to barely 40,000,000. In 1816 there were within the limits of the present German Empire 24,000,000. In 1837 the number had risen to 31,000,000; in 1890, 49,000,000; in 1900, 56,000,000; in 1910, 65,000,000. In 1850 the population was increasing by a quarter of a million a year; in 1911 the increase was nearly a million. It was evident that before long there would be in Germany twice as many people as in France, and then no

military system would avail to offset the numerical superiority. In Great Britain there had been a far greater proportional increase, but whereas in 1801 the population had been 10,500,000, in 1911 it had risen to only 45,000,000. Higher civilization has usually been accompanied by diminishing birthrate, but in Germany this was not so, for reproduction continued with unabated vigor. It was no long time, statisticians said, before there would be 100,000,000 people in the Empire. By the end of the twentieth century there might be twice that many.

The mere physical and economic pressure of such numbers soon becomes terrific, and political conditions must soon be altered profoundly. In the fifth century such an increase brought about the wandering of the nations; in the Middle Ages it sent forth countless multitudes on the Crusades; in the seventeenth century it made possible the aggressions of Louis XIV; at the beginning of the twentieth century it enabled the Hohenzollerns to dream of the dominion of the world.

These new multitudes had to be fed and clothed in a country that was by nature poor. The soil was not fertile; the mines were not rich; there was little virgin or unexploited wealth. In 1905 it was estimated that Germany produced only one-third as much wheat as France. In 1871 half the people of the Empire were engaged in agriculture, but in 1900 scarcely a third. By this time the condition of Germany resembled that of England in so far that vast quantities of food had to be imported from abroad, that these importations had to be purchased with manufactures or bought with ocean-freights, and that great numbers of people would starve if their food-stuffs could not be brought in. Unlike England, however, Germany had no colonies from which to obtain raw materials, and no navy to keep the sea-routes clear.

In Germany colonial ambitions arose too late. England had stretched her dominion around the world before the Germans began the unification of their country. After 1871, while they were occupied in preserving what they had created, France seized upon the most desirable regions remaining. When at last, about 1880, Germany entered the lists, the world had been

preëmpted. The desirable parts of Asia and of Africa that could easily be taken, had been taken by England and by France; while the Monroe Doctrine, like a broad ægis, protected both Americas. There were left only a few tropical districts and a few islands of the sea. Accordingly, the prizes which Germany obtained were insignificant. In 1884 the Cameroons and a part of Guinea were occupied, and in 1886, German East Africa. These gains were almost neutralized, however, by the surrender of Zanzibar in 1890. Later on, a few islands in the Pacific were taken, and in 1897 Kiau Chau and a sphere of influence in China. Though all this was little in comparison with what was held by her rivals, it was nevertheless the beginning of a colonial empire. The trouble was that these possessions were altogether at the mercy of any power strong on the sea.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century the need for a strong navy came to be understood. In widely distant places the Germans were acquiring colonies which they could not defend, while within the Empire great numbers of people depended upon food which could never be imported through the enemy's blockade. The consciousness of these things began after a while to absorb the attention of an influential class.

In the agitation and discussion the Emperor himself took the lead. "The ocean is indispensable to the greatness of Germany," he said in 1900. "As my grandfather reorganized the army, so I shall reorganize my navy." These assertions were the culmination rather than the beginning of a campaign to interest the German people in naval expansion. It was a campaign in which army officers, government officials, and university professors joined. In 1898 Dr. von Schäffle declared that the progress of German commerce had become so immense that Germany must be prepared for anything on the part of her rivals. England "will move heaven and hell against the sea commerce of the new German Empire as soon as she can." Shortly after, Professor Schmoller declared that if Germany was to live and sustain a growing population, she must acquire colonies and she must have a fleet. In 1898 Krupp founded the Flottenverein, or Navy League. In two years it had 600,000

members; in 1910 more than a million. Ceaselessly this organization caused lectures to be delivered, and circulated millions of booklets, many of which were from the first anti-British. This agitation succeeded in every respect, for in a short while the nation was interested, and the creation of a powerful navy became possible.

In the early part of the nineteenth century there was no German fleet in existence. During the plans for the unification of the country, however, the desire for sea power developed, and in 1843 a poet foretold the day when German ships would rule the Baltic. In 1848 the Parliament of Frankfort created a navy, but in the humiliation of the year following, it was sold at auction. Gradually the matter was taken up again, and after the Franco-Prussian War some progress was made. In 1889 the navy was entirely reorganized, and plans were made to enlarge it. In 1895 German sea power was tremendously increased by the opening of the Kiel Canal, which connected the naval bases of Kiel and Wilhelmshaven, and made the entire coast of the Empire a strategic unit. About this time began the propaganda for a much greater fleet. The result was seen in the German Naval Laws of 1898 and 1900.

In 1898 a law passed the Reichstag which provided for the expenditure over a period of years of 1,000,000,000 marks. Warships were to be built rapidly until a certain strength had been attained, after which obsolete vessels were to be replaced, but the fleet was to be enlarged no further. This law, which exceeded even the British Naval Defense Act of 1889, was probably the most ambitious programme undertaken by any state since the days when Themistocles guided the destinies of Athens. It provided for the doubling of the German fleet by 1916. At this time England had 69 battleships; France, 39; Russia, 24; and Germany, 14. The carrying out of this scheme would most probably put Germany in second place.

All this was but the perlude to a mightier effort. In 1899 the Boer War began, and the maritime impotence of Germany was seen more clearly than ever before. Accordingly the nation resolved to submit to still greater burdens, and in 1900 a second naval act was passed. The preamble to the bill stated



that Germany must have a fleet so strong that war with even the mightiest naval power would threaten the existence of that power. More than 1,500,000,000 marks were now appropriated. Where the law of 1898 had provided for 19 battleships and 50 cruisers, the law of 1900 granted 38 battleships and 52 cruisers. Moreover, ample provision was made for arsenals, dock-yards, and equipment. It was evident that Germany desired to achieve upon the water what she had once accomplished on land.

The sudden creation of such vast sea power was in every respect a portentous occurrence, and involved a complete readjustment of the balance of power. All the great nations were affected, and some were alarmed. France and Russia, long accustomed to regard Germany as hostile, now saw her an enemy on the sea also. In the United States it was believed that the Monroe Doctrine was threatened, so that naval activity there was stimulated. In England, when clear realization came, it was believed that the very destiny of the Empire was at stake.

In spite of trade rivalry and commercial competition, the political relations of England and Germany had remained friendly until about this time. France and England were still the enemies, and the possibility of a war between them was a matter of serious concern at this time. But a complete change was brought about by the Boer War. It was afterwards said on the Continent that England in the midst of her perplexity sought the alliance of Germany. However this may be, the subjugation of the Boer farmers aroused in the Empire the liveliest sympathy and an almost universal hatred of the English. Had Germany been able, she might possibly have headed a hostile coalition.

In England this was realized, and when the war was over, it came to be understood that the naval weakness of Germany, which had prevented any action, would soon be a thing of the past. "Germany is making a bold bid for supremacy in the waters we have been accustomed to regard as essentially British," said a writer in 1902. About the same time an author writing upon "Anglophobia in Germany," described the hatred which had long existed, but which recent events had fanned

into a flame. "Let us strengthen our fleet," he said. "It behooves us to be ready." In the great British reviews a series of articles explored every aspect of the subject; in Germany the matter was widely discussed. It was seen that the old conditions were changing, and that the two nations were no longer friends.

Nevertheless, for some time there was in England no sense of peril. Since the battle of Trafalgar, British supremacy had scarcely been disputed. In 1902 this supremacy was still so overwhelming that it was difficult for most Englishmen to conceive of danger. There was, however, a small group of men who, looking into the future, saw the ominous possibilities of what was taking place. Chief among them was King Edward, who now performed his best services for England. With the insight of the true statesman he perceived that England had declined relatively, that she was no longer safe as of old, and that she could not now maintain herself in isolation. Therefore he set about to strengthen England by settling differences and making alliances with those powers whose interests could be reconciled with her interests. This he did with Italy, with Japan, with France, with Russia, and with the United States.

With Italy England had no substantial differences. In 1903 a comprehensive agreement was made concerning the Mediterranean. Between England and France there was much hatred and memory of wrong done in the past, but common interests and the pressure of common danger now drew the two powers together. Moreover, just at this time there appeared in France a statesman, M. Delcassé, who did not despair of raising his country up once more to the position which she had occupied before 1871. He believed that this could be done by the diplomatic isolation of Germany, and by surrounding France with a group of allies. His plan, then, was almost exactly that which Edward VII cherished in England. It was accordingly no difficult matter to conclude an agreement. In 1904 the disputes which had continued for generations, were brought to an end, all outstanding differences were settled, and the two nations entered into the Friendly Understanding, or *Entente Cordiale*. At this time the progress of Russia in eastern Asia had alarmed

both England and Japan, so that in 1905 an alliance between them was made for ten years. Nevertheless, after the situation had been altered by the Russo-Japanese War, England began to seek the friendship of Russia also. This policy, which marked a complete change in British diplomacy, had been urged by a writer as early as 1901. At that time it was impossible, but now with France, the ally of Russia, also the firm friend of England, and with Russia less dangerous on the frontier of India, it was less difficult to come to terms. In 1907, it is said, an understanding was reached about the future spheres of influence in Asia. After this time it was still possible to speak of the Triple Alliance and Dual Alliance; but since now on the one hand England, France, and Russia had drawn together, and on the other hand Italy was less and less closely attached to Austria and Germany, there were as a matter of fact the *Triple Entente* and the alliance of Austria-Hungary with the German Empire. Meanwhile the relations of England with the United States had become so friendly that a war between the two was outside the range of probability. Relying upon this friendship and also upon the Monroe Doctrine, England withdrew her fleets from the Atlantic coast and the Caribbean, and abandoned her naval station at Halifax. Thus, England was no longer isolated and self-sufficient. For good or for ill she had entered the European system.

That Great Britain had really abandoned her isolation, that she was really involved in European politics, and that she was prepared to go far in the support of an ally, was soon evident. The agreement of 1904 had gained for England certain advantages in Egypt and Newfoundland in return for her recognition of French pretensions in Morocco. In 1905, when France was ready to take possession of Morocco, Germany suddenly intervened, and announced to the Sultan that she would uphold his authority. In the crisis which followed, England supported France to the fullest extent, and had France been sufficiently bold, would have joined her in war against Germany. In the Algeiras Conference, which ensued, she continued to play the part of a staunch ally. When, in 1911, the Morocco question came up finally for settlement, and when it seemed that war

could scarcely be avoided, the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer spoke in no uncertain language, and the English fleets were in readiness to sweep the coast of Germany the moment war was declared. How far England was willing to forego her traditional policy for the sake of the friendship of her new allies was seen also in 1911, when Persia was apparently yielded up to Russia to be dealt with as pleased Russia best.

During these years of changing diplomacy the relations with Germany became worse and worse. In 1902 England joined Germany for a moment to coerce Venezuela, but the undertaking was never popular. Kipling denounced it as a league with the Goth and the Hun, and as soon as it was seen that Germany proposed to test the Monroe Doctrine, England withdrew from the enterprise. In the years from 1904 to 1909, Edward VII, who achieved his diplomatic triumphs as much by personal charm as by force and skill, visited Germany several times. On one occasion it was believed that he was trying to make with Germany a comprehensive agreement like that made with France. He was well received, and the visits were returned by the Emperor, but in spite of much cordiality there was no real improvement in the situation.

Every year the agitation in the press of both countries became more virulent. In Germany an exceedingly vigorous propaganda had been carried on since 1898. In England the *London Times* was unwearied in pointing out dangers, while the *National Review* became known as the implacable enemy of Germany. There were not wanting in both countries many who deplored the unfriendly spirit which had arisen, and who asserted that there was no reason why the two nations should not be in friendliest accord. A German writer explained that the new navy grew entirely out of Germany's needs, and was vitally necessary for the defence of her seacoast against the fleets of the Dual Alliance. Nevertheless, in England and elsewhere it was believed that in a peculiar sense the building of this gigantic navy was directed against Great Britain. In 1905 an anonymous writer in *Kringsjaa* explained that Germany had need of a powerful fleet to insure her coast against a blockade,

so as to guarantee the continued importation of the food upon which her industrial population depended, and that the enemy whom she must particularly fear was England. In times past England had destroyed the maritime power of Spain, of Holland, of France, and of Denmark in turn. Unless the Germans could immediately make their fleet too strong to be attacked, they would probably suffer the same fate. It was unfortunate that they had not gone farther before they were observed.

The years from 1902 to 1912 were years of constantly increasing anxiety on the part of England, and constantly increasing boldness in Germany. The period may be divided into two parts: first, the years before 1907, during which England became more and more alarmed, though still confident of her superiority; and secondly, the years from 1907 on, during which the island empire underwent a panic of fear and depression.

In 1905 Sir Robert Reid, writing in the *Deutsche Revue*, strongly deprecated the acute situation which had arisen, but at the same time confessed that it was widely believed in England that the Germans might make a sudden descent upon England, while many people in Germany believed that the English were meditating the destruction of the German fleet. About the same time there was a heated debate in Parliament during which the possibility of foreign invasion was discussed. It will always be a question whether during these years the press of the two countries acted with far-seeing patriotism in calling attention to the dangers which were beginning to appear, but which many people could not perceive, or whether it played a mischievous part in creating the hostility which it incessantly described. At all events, the papers ceased not for a moment to fan suspicion into a flame. It was in vain that well-meaning persons tried to restore good feeling. In 1906 a large number of German editors and town officials visited London, while on both sides of the North Sea prominent men stated earnestly the reasons why the two nations should be friends. All the while the *National Review* and the *Contemporary Review* taught that Germany was the deadly enemy of their country, while in Germany there were unceasing attacks upon England as the great obstacle in Germany's way.

In both countries the building of battleships went on apace. In 1905 the German estimates called for an expenditure of 228,000,000 marks, having increased by four times in the past five years. England had at the start, however, so great a superiority that it was not difficult for her to keep far ahead. There was no doubt that she had a new and dangerous enemy, and that she had not yet adjusted herself to the situation, but most Englishmen believed that they had no reason to fear if they kept vigilantly on the guard. Suddenly there occurred an event which brought about an entire change in the situation.

The Russo-Japanese War was the first great war which had been fought since the struggle between Germany and France in 1870. It was marked by intelligent and effective use for the first time of numberless new appliances and new ideas. It was, therefore, immensely important in that it revealed the methods and possibilities of modern warfare. In no respect was this so true as it was of naval contests. After the battle of Tsushima it was seen that high speed, long range, and weight of metal involved decisive superiority on the sea. As allies of the Japanese, the English first adopted these ideas and put them into practice. In 1907 they completed a battleship which was by far the largest and most heavily armored war vessel which had ever been put afloat, and which had greater speed than any battleship before that time. Where previously armaments had consisted of a large number of guns of different calibre, this ship possessed a small number of very heavy guns, and a large number of small ones. In short, here was a battleship invulnerable to the attacks of other vessels, able to overtake or out-speed an antagonist, always able to choose its own range, and out of range of the enemy's guns, batter the enemy to pieces. All at once the navies of the world became antiquated, for such a ship was superior to a whole squadron of the older vessels. In the history of naval architecture the launching of the Dreadnought is as important as the combat of the Monitor and the Virginia in Hampton Roads.

From this splendid triumph England was soon thrust down into an abyss of despair. For the moment she possessed an invincible warship, but in reality she had done herself a deadly

harm. The Dreadnought had made previous battleships of relatively small account: of such ships England had the largest number, and by means of them she maintained her superiority over Germany. That the new model would be universally followed was evident, for all over the world the great nations at once laid down superdreadnoughts and battleships of stupendous dimensions. In Germany the new ships were all designed to be of the new type, and the building programme was accelerated. It was the peculiar misfortune of England that she taught the world to build ships that would make her own navy ineffective, at the very time when her most dangerous enemy was building the largest number of ships.

After a while this was realized in England, and then at last there settled down upon the island a black depression such as had not been seen since the days of Napoleon I. Actually England's naval supremacy was seriously threatened, and threatened by a rival with whom she was no longer on friendly terms. The newspapers discussed the matter more than any other topic. Public men vied with each other in pessimistic utterance. In 1907 Rudolph Martin, commenting upon the anti-German policy of Edward VII, said: "This policy will be modified before the imminence of a war with Germany, or after the first results of such a war. If not, we shall descend upon England." In the year following, Lord Cromer predicted a great war, and said that England should make herself ready. A year later Lord Roseberry declared that the situation was ominous. About the same time Dr. Gerhardt von Schulze-Gaevernitz was of the opinion that "Peace is indeed endangered, but war is not absolutely unavoidable."

As yet, it is not possible to know just what was the policy of the German government; whether it was building its mighty fleet for the overthrow of England, or merely for the protection of its existing interests. There is no doubt that many Germans had no desire and no intention to strike at England. Nevertheless, it could not be forgotten that the German Empire had reached the splendid position which it occupied by striking down each nation that stood in its way. On land, by a series of terrible blows, it had overthrown Denmark, Austria, and

France. Now that it was about to seek its destiny upon the waters, must not England be the foe whom it would next seek out? It might well be that the Empire stood for peace, and that the German people and the German Emperor desired peace; it could not be forgotten that this Empire was growing and expanding and aggressive, and that hitherto it had taken by force what it had needed.

It was in this spirit that Englishmen received assurances from the Kaiser himself. On March 6, 1908, the London *Times* announced that the German Emperor had tried to influence British policy by secret correspondence with the First Lord of the Admiralty. The letters proved to be of a personal nature, but scarcely had the excitement died down, when the Emperor with great frankness and indiscretion granted an interview to a representative of the *Daily Telegraph*. He declared that he desired peace, but that the majority of his people regarded England as a hostile country. Whatever may have been the meaning of this, Englishmen felt that it was a warlike manifesto. The whole country was in a tumult.

British statesmen now spoke in no undecided manner. In November, Lord Roberts in the House of Lords proposed that England should raise an army of 1,000,000 men to cope with a possible invasion. "It is my absolute belief," he said, that "without a military organization more adequate to the certain perils of the future our empire will fall away from us and our power pass away." In the following August he advocated universal conscription. As of old, however, most Englishmen were inclined to rely upon their ships. "If the navy fails it will be useless to discuss any other subject." Mr. Asquith defined the two-power standard as a ten per cent superiority in capital ships over the combined strength of the next two powers. At the moment, however, this was gone. At the present rate of building, Germany would soon have more dreadnoughts than England, while Austria was about to build four, which could certainly be counted in the German column. England must enlarge her programme.

The naval burden had now become so grievous that it was not easy to increase it. The cost of battleships had risen



prodigiously. Moreover, the British government had undertaken comprehensive social legislation, which made the budget still greater. Already the government was facing a deficit at the same time that consols were selling at eighty-three.

Just at this juncture the country was thrilled by a writer who succeeded in bringing to the heart of the nation what was alarming so many. In the early part of 1909 appeared the play, "An Englishman's Home." It came out anonymously, but was at once ascribed to Guy de Maurier. From the point of view of dramatic excellence it was crude and of trifling merit, but it carried a powerful appeal, and it came at the critical moment. A nation defenceless yet confident; a country gentleman, bluff, hearty, and self-reliant, shot at last by the enemy for defending his home. This was enough. In London it was played to crowded houses, and then taken into the provinces. For a while the newspapers discussed little else. It was rumored afterward that the English government, desiring to arouse the country, had urged the writing of such a work. If this be true, they succeeded in their design, for England was aroused at last.

It is characteristic of Englishmen that at times they depreciate and decry themselves unduly, seeing the present as dark and the future as hopeless. This was so during the naval panic of 1909. It might have seemed that an invasion from Germany was momentarily expected. In Berlin, *Ulk* suggested that every night England be locked up in its strongest bank for safe keeping. A cartoon in the same paper showed Englishmen madly bailing out the Thames in search of German spies. In *Amsterdammer* an artist drew a British Lion dashing about with a German warship tied to his tail. Lord Roberts insisted upon a great army. The Secretary for War asked for 300,000 territorial troops, and the London *Times* advocated compulsory service. The government immediately decided to build five instead of four dreadnoughts, and presently proposed the construction of eight in the current year. The debate in the House of Commons took place before crowded galleries. The First Lord of the Admiralty declared that it could not be known how fast Germany was building her fleet, but that Germany bade fair soon to have the most powerful navy in the world.

Mr. Balfour, leader of the Opposition, asserted that England must strain every nerve now to maintain even the one-power standard in first-class ships. Sir Edward Grey said that the fleet should be rebuilt.

From this time on there is in English public life a certain note of hopelessness and depression. The race is beginning to tell. Germany is just behind, and cannot be shaken off. At the Second Hague Conference in 1907 England had proposed the limitation of armaments, but Germany refused absolutely to consider it. In 1909 Grand Admiral von Koester declared that such an understanding with England was impossible, since Germany could not enter into it without permanently endangering her prestige. Some Germans boasted that England could not always keep ahead. This was believed by many Englishmen, who declared that salvation lay in sweeping away the German navy before it became any larger. Some Germans, indeed, were amazed that England suffered their fleet to increase. To-day you might destroy us, but not to-morrow, said one of them exultantly. It is possible that this explains in part England's zeal for France during the trouble about Morocco.

There was much reason for pessimism, since Germany was moving on with giant strides. Every year saw an increase in her commerce, her manufactures, her national wealth, her population, her army, and her navy. On the Continent France still lay under the tradition of 1871. After the war with Japan, Russia was for a time eliminated from European politics. On the other hand Austria and Germany had drawn together in close alliance, with Germany as leader. At the behest of the Kaiser 7,000,000 men could take the field. It might seem to those who stayed to look that Germany was standing across central Europe like a colossus, with face toward the sea, and shadow lying darkest over England.

On both sides of the North Sea naval activity was redoubled. In Germany the finances became more and more confused, and in England the burden ever harder to bear. The Elbe and the Clyde resounded with blows as when the thunder-bolts were forged against the Titans. Among Englishmen a new foreign policy had developed, the corner-stone of which was opposition

to Germany and resolution to maintain constant superiority over her fleet. Particularly was this so after the wrath aroused in Germany because of England's attitude in 1911. The Admiralty's standard was declared to be a sixty per cent lead over the next greatest naval power.

This was clear in 1912, when English public men made utterances in which Germany was explicitly mentioned. In February, Winston Churchill, speaking at Glasgow, declared that the British navy was a necessity, the German a luxury. To the Germans it meant expansion; to England, existence. All the treasure and power, he said, which had been accumulated through so many centuries of sacrifice, would be swept away if naval supremacy were impaired for a moment. England would welcome limitation of armaments, but her superiority she would certainly maintain. A month later he announced that naval expansion would be regulated entirely now by the number of warships constructed in Germany. If the Germans accelerated their programme, the English would not only lay down more battleships, but would make the increase greater proportionately. "If this is insular arrogance, it is also the first condition of our existence." About this time Lord Haldane, Secretary for War, went to Berlin for the purpose of arriving at some lasting agreement. But meanwhile the surplus of the British Exchequer was set aside for more ships, if they should be needed.

Neither conciliation nor firmness had any effect. The attitude of England during the Morocco crisis had caused a passion of anger in Germany, so that now she would listen to nothing. "The German people know who it is that wants to hold universal sway when Germany desires to expand in the world," said Herr von Heydebrand in the Reichstag. "The German people will know how to give a German answer." This was in November, 1911. Almost at the same time appeared a book by General Bernhardt, a distinguished officer, in which it was asserted that Germanism must be propagated by the sword, and that such conquest was desirable. First France must be overthrown so completely that she could never get in the way again. Then would come the reckoning with England. While this book was being read, increased naval estimates were announced in Ger-

many, whereupon in England the surplus was at once diverted to the construction of additional battleships.

And so at last it had come to this, that the two greatest nations of Europe, the two which should be the leaders of its civilization, were in deadly antagonism, with each thinking most about its rival. From the Atlantic, from the Mediterranean, from the China seas, England had drawn her war fleets in an ever-increasing cordon around the British Isles. Feverishly new ships were being constructed; zealously new naval bases were prepared. All of this was avowedly against Germany. And beyond the North Sea millions of German artisans and peasants were paying hunger taxes to build fleets against England. What would be the outcome of this? A war between the two would be a world disaster, incalculable in its horror and destruction, while not less calamitous would be the obliteration of England under a triumphant German civilization.

As the historian reaches the immediate present, he cannot pierce the veil before him except by prophecy, and such prophecy is idle and fruitless. Nevertheless, whatever comes, it may well be that future writers looking back will declare that the most ominous thing in European politics at the beginning of the twentieth century was the dangerous rivalry of Germany and England.

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